

RECYCLED PAPER FACTS & INFORMATION

Environmental Facts

Did you know that 1 ton of recycled paper.....

- ◆ saves 20 trees and 7,000 gallons of water
- ◆ eliminates three cubic yards of landfill space
- ◆ eliminates 60 pounds of air pollutants
- ◆ saves enough energy to power the average home for six months

Did you know that paper makes up nearly 40% of the waste stream?

Buying recycled paper is critical to making recycling work, as it creates economic markets for this material.



The Debate About Recycled Paper

Many people still believe that paper made with recycled content does not look as good, or perform at the same level as virgin paper. While this may have been true in the past, technological changes in the late 1980s and 1990s have brought recycled paper up to the same standards as virgin paper in all respects, including copyability, brightness, moisture content, archival quality, etc.

Appearance

While some recycled papers with 100% recycled content will not be bright white and may contain flecks, this is not true for copy paper which meets the minimum federal and state recycled content standards of 30% post-consumer content. If you doubt this fact, put together a packet of several recycled paper sheets from the state contract with several virgin sheets and ask a friend or office mate to tell you which ones are the recycled papers (make sure you keep track!). Nine times out of ten, recycled paper will be indistinguishable from the virgin and people will not be able to tell them apart.

Performance

Perhaps the largest concern about recycled paper has to do with its performance in copy machines and laser printers. Blaming copy machine jams on recycled content is a common refrain in offices and among technicians. However, the Operational Services Division has conducted ongoing research into this matter and determined that copy paper should work as well as virgin paper in virtually all types of machines. Here are some tips to help guide you through the process of addressing copy machine jams.

- ⇒ **Copy paper has a right side up** (look for the arrow on the wrapper) and should be placed in machines according to the instructions, otherwise jamming may result whether or not the paper is recycled.
- ⇒ If paper is left out of its wrapper on a table or desk for any extended period (even overnight) it will gather dust and moisture, especially if it is humid, leading to jams. **Make sure all paper ream contents are placed inside machines after they are opened.**
- ⇒ Some machines **may require the removal of the top and bottom sheets** of each ream since these sheets may be contaminated with glue from the paper wrapper (do not forget to recycle them).
- ⇒ Some copy **papers may work differently in different machines**. If you are having trouble with a specific copy paper, do not blame all recycled papers, but try another brand. That is why there are five different copy papers on state contract.
- ⇒ Do not let your copy machine technician tell you that recycled paper will void warranties and does not work in your machine. This is just not true. **Ask your technician to adjust your machine if you are having trouble with your recycled paper.** The new Commonwealth contract for copy machines forbids technicians from blaming recycled paper for machine problems and requires that machines be able to accept all paper on state contract. No vendor has raised any concerns about these provisions.